

PART V

Crops

Major Crops

Because of the importance of livestock, dairy and poultry farming, a major part of Skamania County's cropland is used for growing feed crops. About 73 percent of harvested cropland in 1954 was used to grow hay and silage. Most of this feed is used directly on the farms or sold locally to livestock and dairy men. Clover and timothy mixtures grown for hay were the most common crop with 615 acres harvested in 1954. The second ranking crops in acreage were other hays including grasses and sweet clover. Fruits, nuts and grapes were third. Other crops ranked in order of acreage importance were: alfalfa, small grains for hay, wild hay, silage, berries, oats, vetch or peas grown for hay, wheat and asparagus.

Crop Trends

One of the major agricultural trends in Skamania County has been a decrease in harvested cropland. Only 2,740 acres of crops were harvested in 1954

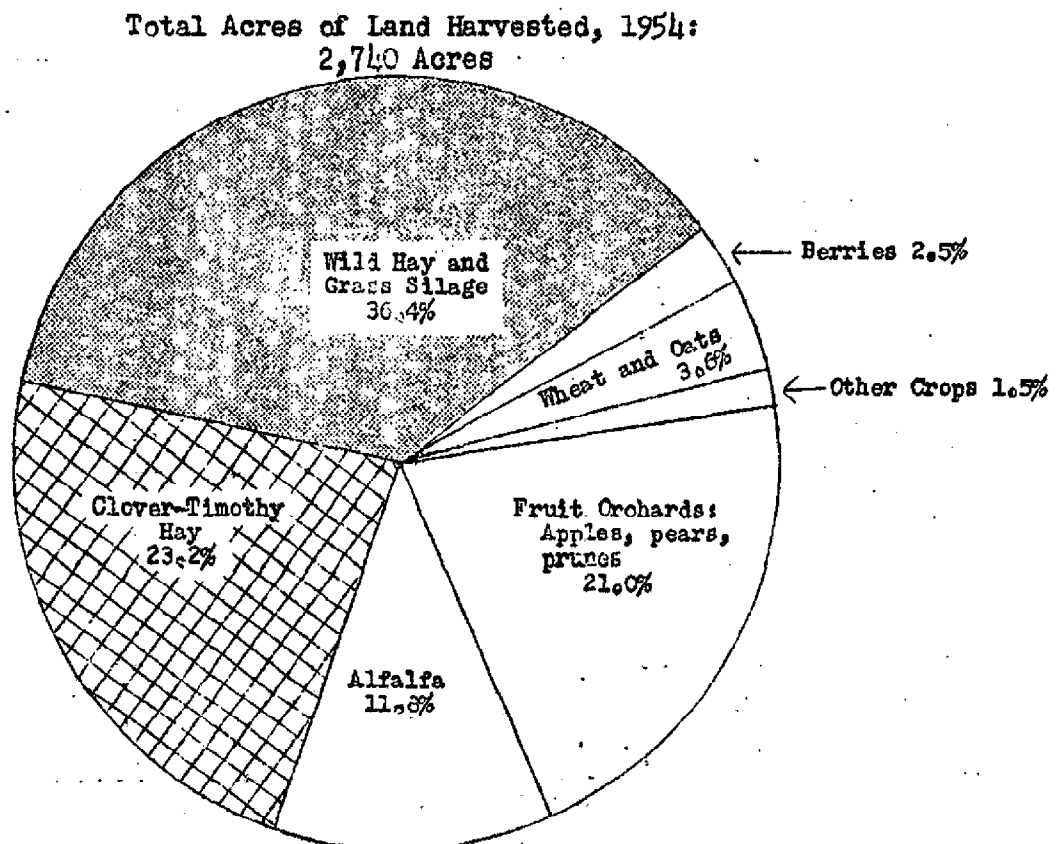


Figure 11.- Percent of Total Cropland in Leading Crops
Skamania County, 1954
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954)

compared with 4,400 acres in 1939. Hay has declined most; the principal reason for this being the decline in horses and mules but the sharp decline in farm numbers since 1939 is also partly responsible. Small grains grown for hay have declined from 900 acres in 1939 to 220 acres in 1954. Other hay declined from 1,300 acres in 1944 to 590 acres in 1954. Acreage devoted to other minor crops in the county has generally decreased since 1939.

Hay and Silage Crops

Throughout the history of Skamania County the most important crop from the acreage standpoint has been hay. Several different types of hay and silage are grown but timothy and clover mixtures have been the most popular crops in recent years. During the 1940's clover and timothy mixtures declined from 800 acres in 1940 to 420 acres in 1947 but a new peak of 900 acres were reached in 1951. Acreage in recent years has fluctuated from 500 to 650 acres annually. In 1954 a total of 38 farms grew clover and timothy mixtures for hay and about one-fifth of the crop was sold in that year. Various grass and sweet clover hays, classed by the Census as other hay, have been a leading forage crop for many years. During 1954 a total of 590 acres of other hay was harvested on 50 Skamania County farms. Very little of this is produced for sale.

Table 16.- Clover-Timothy and Alfalfa Hay
Acreage, Yield and Production
Skamania County, 1939-1955

Year	Clover and Timothy Hay			Alfalfa Hay		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)
1939	750	1.5	1,100	400	2.0	800
1940	800	1.5	1,220	450	2.0	900
1941	800	1.4	1,130	520	1.5	780
1942	600	2.2	1,300	510	3.0	1,530
1943	600	1.9	1,140	560	1.5	840
1944	470	1.9	880	540	2.0	1,100
1945	460	1.5	690	530	2.1	1,100
1946	450	1.6	700	450	2.0	900
1947	420	1.6	670	430	2.0	860
1948	500	1.7	850	460	2.5	1,150
1949	590	1.2	710	400	1.5	600
1950	600	1.1	660	410	1.6	660
1951	900	2.4	2,120	420	3.6	1,500
1952	600	1.5	900	420	1.5	630
1953	600	1.2	720	440	1.5	660
1954	650	1.6	1,040	330	3.0	990
1955	500	.9	470	350	2.4	850

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Est. Divn.
State of Washington

Small grains were once an important hay crop. Over 900 acres of small grains were harvested for hay in 1939. The decreasing number of horses used for work power contributed to the decline in the production of small grains

for hay. About 220 acres of small grains were cut for hay on 25 farms in 1954 with no sales of small grain hay reported.

Alfalfa has become the third most important hay crop during recent years. The acreage devoted to alfalfa has generally been less since the peak of 560 acres was reached in 1943. Thirty farms produced alfalfa on 320 acres in 1954. About one-fourth of the crop was sold. Wild hay is cut on a few farms with acreage harvested varying from year to year. During 1954 seven farms cut 120 acres of wild hay.

The production of grass silage has increased in recent years. Although the 1949 Census of Agriculture reported no Skamania County farms producing silage, there were 4 farms making silage in 1954. Silage was produced from 76 acres in that year, with 380 tons (green weight) being stored.

Oats, Other Small Grains and Corn

Production of small grains on a commercial basis is limited by topography. Oats is the most important grain crop grown in the valley lands. Oats increased rapidly in the early 1940's reaching a peak of 280 acres in 1944 but since that time the acreage has declined steadily. Six farms grew 55 acres in 1954. Oats are generally grown for use on the home farm although as much as one-half of the crop may be sold to neighboring farms in some years.

Table 17.- Barley and Oats: Acreage, Yield and Production
Skamania County, 1939-1955

Year	Barley			Oats		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	---	---	---	70	34.0	2,380
1940	---	---	---	150	34.0	5,100
1941	---	---	---	210	42.0	8,820
1942	30	16.0	480	200	46.0	9,200
1943	30	15.0	450	240	49.0	11,760
1944	20	12.0	240	280	45.0	12,600
1945	20	19.0	380	190	36.0	6,840
1946	20	23.0	460	180	38.0	6,840
1947	20	19.0	380	190	38.0	7,220
1948	30	22.0	660	200	27.0	5,400
1949	30	24.0	720	150	30.0	4,500
1950	20	26.0	520	170	30.0	5,100
1951	10	23.0	230	140	31.0	4,340
1952	---	---	---	110	42.0	4,620
1953	---	---	---	70	43.0	3,010
1954	---	---	---	70	33.0	2,310
1955	---	---	---	50	38.0	1,900

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

A small acreage of barley was grown during the mid-1940's, but very little has been produced in recent years. Field corn production declined throughout the 1940's and no corn has been reported during recent years. Wheat acreage has generally varied from 20 to 30 acres. The crop generally is used for feed or hay on the farms where it is grown.

Table 18.- Wheat and Corn: Acreage, Yield and Production
Skamania County, 1939-1956

Year	All Wheat			Corn		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	30	15.7	470	50	33.0	1,650
1940	20	15.0	300	40	37.5	1,500
1941	30	16.7	500	30	29.0	870
1942	30	25.0	750	50	20.0	1,000
1943	20	30.0	600	50	26.0	1,300
1944	30	25.3	760	70	33.0	2,310
1945	30	21.0	630	30	43.0	1,290
1946	30	26.7	800	40	36.0	1,440
1947	20	30.0	600	30	37.0	1,110
1948	20	30.0	600	10	35.0	350
1949	70	30.7	2,150	10	37.0	370
1950	10	20.0	200	10	33.0	330
1951	30	21.0	630	10	38.0	380
1952	30	17.0	510	---	---	---
1953	20	20.0	400	---	---	---
1954	30	21.7	650	---	---	---
1955	20	22.0	440	---	---	---
1956	10	13.0	130	---	---	---

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Berries and Vegetables

Skamania County is not self-sufficient in the production of berries and vegetables. The small population, the topography and the lack of fertile soil needed in the production of berries and vegetables on a commercial scale are limiting factors. Commercial vegetables have declined since 1939. Nine acres of asparagus represented the only commercial vegetable production in the county during 1954. About 160 Skamania County farms reported raising vegetables for home use in 1954.

Berry production has increased in recent years after declining during the 1940's. A total of 68 acres of berries were harvested in 1954 compared with 38 in 1939. Strawberries are the most important berry crop with 35 acres grown in 1954 followed by blackberries (19 acres), boysenberries (13 acres) and raspberries (1 acre).

Table 19.- Berry Crops: Acreage and Production
Skamania County, 1949-1957

Year	Strawberries		Red Raspberries		Boysenberries		Blackberries	
	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons
1949	11	17	1	2	1	2	--	--
1950	5	10	1	2	5	3	--	--
1951	5	10	1	2	5	5	5	5
1952	10	20	1	2	10	10	5	5
1953	15	30	10	20	13	15	10	20
1954	20	50	15	35	13	20	20	30
1955	45	75	20	40	15	22	20	35
1956	35	35	30	70	15	25	5	5
1957	35	70	30	105	15	30	10	30

Sources: U.S. Census, Agriculture
USDA, Agricultural Estimates Divn.

Tree Fruits, Nuts and Grapes

The sale of fruits, nuts and berries is the most important source of income in Skamania County agriculture. Sales of these crops totaled \$435,000 in 1954 which was 55 percent of the total sales of agricultural products by Skamania County farmers. During 1954 a total of 590 acres was devoted to tree fruits, nuts and grapes. Fruit is grown in the Columbia River lowlands, White Salmon and Washougal Valleys.

Pears are the major commercial fruit crop of Skamania County, the county ranking fifth in the state. The number of bearing pear trees totaled 18,000 in 1954. Apples are the second ranking fruit crop, a total of 6,400 bearing trees being reported on 70 farms in 1954. Plums and prunes are the other important tree fruits. Over 2,000 bearing trees were enumerated in 1954. Small numbers of cherry, peach, apricot, filbert and walnut trees are also grown. Pears, apples, plums and prunes are the commercial fruit crops of Skamania County. Other tree fruits and nuts and grapes are grown principally for home use.

Census enumerations since 1939 have indicated a decrease in total fruit and nut trees. Three major fruit crops have maintained their respective positions since that time. However, the total number of pear trees has increased by 1,000 since 1939 while apple and plums and prunes have decreased by 10,000 and 6,000 trees, respectively. Abandonment of farms and the freezing weather of 1950 and 1955 are largely responsible for the decline.